

104TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 550

To prohibit economic assistance, military assistance, or arms transfers to the Government of Mauritania until appropriate action is taken to eliminate chattel slavery in Mauritania.

---

## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 17, 1995

Mr. ZIMMER (for himself, Mr. PORTER, Mr. LANTOS, and Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

---

## A BILL

To prohibit economic assistance, military assistance, or arms transfers to the Government of Mauritania until appropriate action is taken to eliminate chattel slavery in Mauritania.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4       The Congress makes the following findings:

5               (1) The practice of slavery in Mauritania has  
6       been officially abolished 3 times in Mauritania's his-  
7       tory, including a 1961 constitutional prohibition and  
8       a 1980 government decree declaring that "slavery is

1 definitely abolished throughout the national terri-  
2 tory'' of Mauritania. Yet, despite these legal prohibi-  
3 tions of slavery, slavery remains a common practice  
4 in Mauritania.

5 (2) The United States Department of State's  
6 Country Reports on Human Rights for 1993 noted  
7 that tens of thousands of people live in slavery or  
8 near slavery even though "slavery has been officially  
9 abolished several times'', and that many former  
10 slaves who now live independently still continue to  
11 perform unpaid labor for their former masters out of  
12 a sense of fear and duty.

13 (3) Human Rights Watch/Africa estimated in a  
14 1994 report that 100,000 people live in servitude in  
15 Mauritania and noted that the sale of slaves still  
16 persists despite claims by the Government of Mauri-  
17 tania that slave sales ended in the 1960's.

18 (4) In Mauritania, for which more than  
19 \$3,900,000 in United States foreign aid was appro-  
20 priated in fiscal year 1994, there is no indication  
21 that the present government of Mauritania has seri-  
22 ously attempted to enforce the prohibition against  
23 slavery, to prosecute slaveholders, or to educate the  
24 people of Mauritania about their rights of freedom.

1 **SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, MILI-**  
2 **TARY ASSISTANCE, OR ARMS TRANSFERS TO**  
3 **THE GOVERNMENT OF MAURITANIA UNLESS**  
4 **APPROPRIATE ACTION IS TAKEN TO ELIMI-**  
5 **NATE CHATTEL SLAVERY.**

6 The President may not provide economic assistance,  
7 military assistance, or arms transfers to the Government  
8 of Mauritania unless the President certifies to the Con-  
9 gress that such Government has taken appropriate action  
10 to eliminate chattel slavery in Mauritania, including—

- 11 (1) the enactment of anti-slavery laws that pro-  
12 vide appropriate punishment for violators of such  
13 laws; and  
14 (2) the rigorous enforcement of such laws.

15 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

16 For purposes of this Act:

17 (1) **ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.**—The term “eco-  
18 nomic assistance” means any assistance under part  
19 I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C.  
20 2151 et seq.) and any assistance under chapter 4 of  
21 part II of such Act (22 U.S.C. 2346 et seq.) (relat-  
22 ing to the economic support fund), except that such  
23 term does not include humanitarian assistance.

24 (2) **MILITARY ASSISTANCE OR ARMS TRANS-**  
25 **FERS.**—The term “military assistance or arms  
26 transfers” means—

1 (A) assistance under chapter 2 of part II  
2 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22  
3 U.S.C. 2311 et seq.) (relating to military assist-  
4 ance), including the transfer of excess defense  
5 articles under sections 516 through 519 of that  
6 Act (22 U.S.C. 2321j through 2321m);

7 (B) assistance under chapter 5 of part II  
8 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22  
9 U.S.C. 2347 et seq.) (relating to international  
10 military education and training);

11 (C) assistance under the “Foreign Military  
12 Financing Program” under section 23 of the  
13 Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2763); or

14 (D) the transfer of defense articles, de-  
15 fense services, or design and construction serv-  
16 ices under the Arms Export Control Act (22  
17 U.S.C. 2751 et seq.), including defense articles  
18 and defense services licensed or approved for  
19 export under section 38 of that Act (22 U.S.C.  
20 2778).

○